

Goal #2 – Create a Resilient, Scalable, and Agile IT Infrastructure



Obj. 1 - Ensure a base level infrastructure is in place to accommodate growth

Obj. 2 - Provide enterprise infrastructure as a utility

Obj. 3 - Seek opportunities to adopt and implement cost-effective shared service approaches

Obj. 4 - Leverage transformational technologies, e.g., cloud computing, for improved operational efficiencies

The need for the City's network to be able to dynamically grow and evolve on demand is paramount. Yet, lowering costs while providing reliable connectivity to over 450 City locations via a wide area network is also a primary goal for us. The business requirements of today and tomorrow demand a high-performance network infrastructure that can support increased use of video, faster access to data and applications, and low power use. Mobile solution providers are broadening their offerings to address the needs of in-line business users³.

Open standards are also a requirement for ease of multi-agency connectivity, third-party integration and security compliance with industry standards. We have begun a project this fiscal year to upgrade and standardize the Voice and Telco platforms into a single system throughout most of the City. This project will include all associated call center applications.

We will promote the use of Green IT⁴ to reduce energy and the real estate footprint by consolidating data center space across the City. Seven facilities have been identified for consolidation activities this fiscal year. In addition, new data center physical facilities will be shared with the Houston Police Department, thus demonstrating our commitment to share services and resources. Furthermore, as part of the consolidation exercise, we seek to expand the use of virtualization platforms to shift our investments to more efficient computing platforms, improve system delivery, and streamline costs.

Cloud computing has been embraced by the City of Houston and is already helping us reduce the total cost of ownership. However, opportunities still abound and the game has already changed in this very fast moving technology. Beyond the cloud are opportunities to move to a hybrid model that completely changes the way we run IT. We prefer using application hosting when there is a desire to satisfy a business need more quickly than standing up infrastructure.

³ The Expanding Role of Mobility In The Workplace – Forrester Research February 2012

⁴ Green IT, also referred to as Green Computing, is the study and practice of environmentally sustainable technology – source: Wikipedia